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Memorandum for:

The attached typescript, prepared by

[redacted] was requested by

Col. John Berry, OSD/International Security Policy.

It will be used in Secretary of Defense Weinberger's
briefing book for French Defense Minister Quiles'
visit on 9-10 December.

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**Office of European Analysis
Directorate of Intelligence**

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Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D. C. 20505

DIRECTORATE FOR INTELLIGENCE

2 December 1985

FRENCH DEFENSE POLICY AFTER THE 1986 ELECTIONSummary

The French Socialist Party is likely to lose its majority in the National Assembly in the legislative election next March. As a result, President Mitterrand would face a government headed by a prime minister and probably a new defense minister drawn from the ranks of the opposition. While we would expect to see more continuity than change in overall French defense policy, a conservative defense minister probably would push for greater French participation in SDI research, at least token increases in defense spending, and closer military cooperation with NATO. [redacted]

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Introduction

We would expect continuity rather than change to be the theme of French defense policy after the 1986 election, even if the centrist-conservative opposition parties win. Opposition views of defense are not greatly different from those of the Socialists, and are highlighted by a common concern about maintaining the independence and viability of the French nuclear deterrent. Political and economic realities, moreover, would prevent the opposition from implementing most of those changes it does call for in its defense platform. Nonetheless, we believe some changes may take place, particularly in SDI, some areas of defense spending, and in the relationship with NATO. [redacted]

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This paper was prepared by [redacted]
the Office of European Analysis. Comments and questions are
welcome and may be directed to [redacted] Chief, European
Issues Division, [redacted]

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SDI

Opposition defense policy probably would view French participation in SDI research more favorably than does the Socialist government. Spokesmen for both opposition parties have emphasized the technological advances that will accompany SDI research and have encouraged greater industrial involvement. For example, Jacques Chirac, leader of the neo-Gaullist RPR party, told an SDI conference in Paris that France should not reject the initiative out of hand, but should remain open to the scientific, industrial, and technological spinoffs of SDI. Chirac also emphasized that the government should play an active role in organizing the forms of cooperation and information sharing between governments. [REDACTED]

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None of the opposition statements, however, addresses the basic French problem with SDI: that the very concept of strategic defense threatens the viability of the independent French deterrent. Thus, a more conservative defense policy probably would seek to avoid endorsing strategic defense as a concept while participating more actively in the research phase of SDI. [REDACTED]

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Defense Spending

Both major opposition parties, while agreeing with the Socialists that nuclear forces should have priority in the defense budget, have been critical of spending cuts for conventional forces and operations. According to the US Embassy, representatives from the two opposition parties agreed in October on a common defense platform that indicates an opposition defense policy after the election would call for a 4-percent annual real growth in the defense budget. The platform also calls for balanced spending between the nuclear and conventional forces. [REDACTED]

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Any government, however, would find it difficult to increase overall defense spending without paring other government outlays. We believe serious economic constraints would prevent it from making more than token increases in the defense budget. We do not expect a new government to reverse decisions taken by Defense Ministers Hernu and Quiles to deploy new and improved nuclear weapons. [REDACTED]

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Military Cooperation

The opposition defense platform also calls for increased military cooperation with the NATO, and particularly West Germany. The proposals call for a clear signal of French intent to fight in NATO's forward defense. Cooperation with NATO would build what the Socialists began and would include discussing with West Germany and Great Britain the use of tactical nuclear weapons. It would stop short, however, of reintegration into NATO's military structure. [REDACTED]

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We doubt the opposition could achieve even the kind of cooperation they propose, and we believe any progress in this area is likely to be slow, fitful, and beset with friction. The opposition agrees with the Socialists that France should retain its independence in nuclear matters and probably would discover in office that it cannot share information on French nuclear plans without compromising its decision making sovereignty. Mitterrand and West German Chancellor Kohl reached an agreement in principle in 1982, but Paris has been extremely reluctant to discuss its nuclear planning with Bonn in any depth.

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